

Banana Link is a small not-for-profit campaign organisation working towards a socially just, environmentally sound and economically viable banana industry. For resources, educational materials and support promoting Fairtrade within your school, workplace or community group, get in touch with Banana Link.

To find out more about other Fairtrade products or order promotional resources, visit the Fairtrade Foundation website [www.fairtrade.org](http://www.fairtrade.org)



42-58 St George's Street  
Norwich NR3 1AB  
Tel: 01603 765670

Email: [info@bananalink.org.uk](mailto:info@bananalink.org.uk)  
[www.bananalink.org.uk](http://www.bananalink.org.uk)



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# FAIRTRADE BANANAS

## What is Fairtrade?

Bananas with a Fairtrade label have been produced on small farms or plantations that meet the Fairtrade social and environmental criteria. Choosing Fairtrade bananas has a direct and positive impact on the lives of producers, workers and their communities. Producers are guaranteed a minimum price, which covers basic food, housing, health and education needs.

The Fairtrade price is based on the ACTUAL costs of production. A social premium is also paid on every box of Fairtrade bananas and used for social and environmental improvements. Projects include buying school furniture, improving roads to take bananas to port and buying weed cutters to reduce pesticide use. Around 1 in every 3 bananas sold in the UK carry the Fairtrade logo – we munch our way through over half a million Fairtrade bananas a day!

## Why Fairtrade?

Most of the conventional bananas that are exported to the UK are produced on large-scale plantations in Latin America and West Africa where there is a race to the bottom in terms of wages and working conditions - as multinational companies seeking ever 'cheaper' bananas relocate to countries with the lowest social and environmental standards.

Wages are often not enough to meet basic food needs with some plantation workers earning less than £1 a day, working days can be 10-14 hours and exposure to toxic chemicals is common. When workers try to join trade unions to improve their conditions, they are often met with repression or violence.



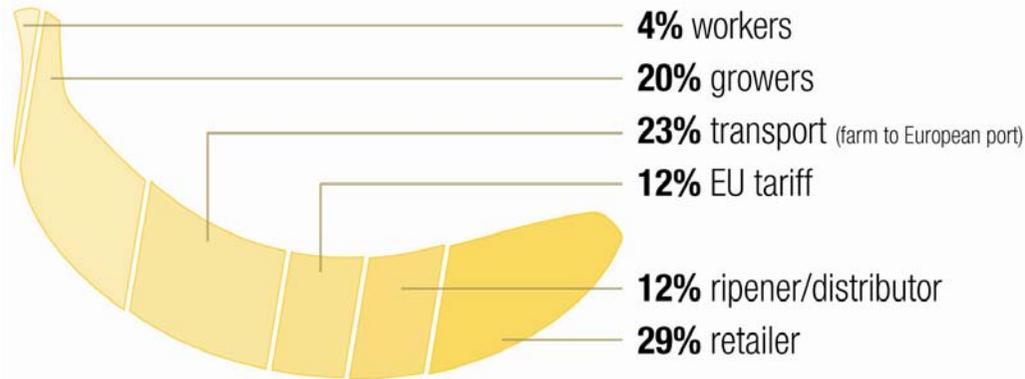
*William Gabriel, Windwards banana farmer  
Photo: Simon Rawles (Fairtrade Foundation)*

Fairtrade isn't a magic wand that means that the world is suddenly perfect for producers, but it is a stepping stone. Importantly, buying Fairtrade sends out a loud message to supermarkets that consumers are concerned about the conditions in which bananas and other food stuffs are grown.

It is also a challenge to other producers, including the 5 banana companies who control around 80% of international trade, to clean up their act.

In the tiny Windward Islands nearly all bananas are Fairtrade labelled which equates to over 3,300 banana farmers benefiting directly from the Fairtrade system.

As the diagram below shows, in the split for a conventional Latin America plantation banana, a plantation worker only receives 4p and the retailers keep up to 29p, a large share of the retail price.



In contrast, small farmers producing Fairtrade bananas are guaranteed a minimum price calculated to cover the real costs of production and workers should receive a living wage that covers their basic household needs.

### Where can you buy Fairtrade bananas?

It's great that in 2012 Fairtrade bananas will account for about 35% of the UK banana market but many more farmers and workers would benefit if we bought even more.

### Supermarkets

With supermarkets now selling the bulk of Fairtrade certified fresh fruit produce you can buy Fairtrade bananas from all major supermarkets. In 2007, Sainsbury's and Waitrose both converted to selling 100% Fairtrade bananas. This year the Co-operative Group are also converting all of their bananas to Fairtrade! If you cannot find Fairtrade bananas in your local supermarket, make sure that you bring it to the attention of the store manager by writing a letter, sending an email or filling in a customer comments card.

Conventional banana prices in supermarkets are significantly lower than Fairtrade prices. This can make it harder to sell Fairtrade bananas as the price gap can seem large to customers watching their expenditure. However conventional prices are low because for nearly a decade supermarkets have been pursuing a 'banana price war'.

In 1991 a kilo of bananas cost £1.26 but in December 2011 cost only 72p!! At the same time the cost of producing bananas has risen as have the household costs of workers and farmers. Our research indicates that so little value is passing back down the chain that it is impossible for many workers to be paid a living wage or for farmers to cover the real costs of production.

**Local shops:** It is possible to buy Fairtrade bananas from a handful of small shops and market stalls as an alternative to buying from the supermarket chains. If you would like your local shop to sell

If you would like your local shop to sell Fairtrade bananas then contact the following wholesalers who supply small retail outlets:

4DegreesC	<a href="http://www.4degreesc.com">www.4degreesc.com</a>
Allison Risebro & Co Ltd	<a href="http://www.allisonrisebro.co.uk">www.allisonrisebro.co.uk</a>
Choice Organics	<a href="http://www.choice-organics.com">www.choice-organics.com</a>
DDP Ltd	<a href="http://www.ddpltd.com">www.ddpltd.com</a>
Fresh Direct (UK) Limited	<a href="http://www.freshdirect.co.uk/productoffering.aspx">www.freshdirect.co.uk/productoffering.aspx</a>
Oliver Kay Ltd	<a href="http://www.oliverkayproduce.co.uk">www.oliverkayproduce.co.uk</a>
Phoenix Organics Ltd	<a href="http://www.phoenixorganics.ltd.uk">www.phoenixorganics.ltd.uk</a>
Proctors Quality Produce Ltd	<a href="http://www.proctorswholesale.co.uk/products.html">www.proctorswholesale.co.uk/products.html</a>
Reynolds Catering Supplies Ltd	<a href="http://www.reynolds-cs.com">www.reynolds-cs.com</a>
Total Produce	<a href="http://www.totalproduce.com">www.totalproduce.com</a>
W Pauley & Co Ltd	<a href="http://www.pauleys.co.uk">www.pauleys.co.uk</a>

### Action You Can Take!

- Join our Make Fruit Fair campaign - [www.makefruitfair.org.uk](http://www.makefruitfair.org.uk) !
- Visit [www.supportcaribbeanbananas.org.uk](http://www.supportcaribbeanbananas.org.uk) to support Windward Islands farmers.
- Become a Banana Link supporter and receive updates on our work and respond to action requests from our partners in Latin America, West Africa and the Caribbean.
- Talk to your family and friends - one in five people learn about Fairtrade by word of mouth.
- Encourage your local shop or supermarket to stock Fairtrade bananas.